

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 OMB-01 IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9770

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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SUBJECT: SEP 28 SYRIAN MEDIA REPORT POPULAR APPROVAL FOR EXECUTION
OF SEMIRAMIS GUERRILLAS AND CONDEMN FATAH AND IRAQI REGIME
FOR THEIR INVOLVEMENT

1. SYRIAN MEDIA CONCENTRATED ON POSITIVE REACTION TO HANGING
OF THREE GUERRILLAS, FATAH AND IRAQI RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLANNING
OPERATION, CONTINUATION OF PRES. ASAD'S VISITS TO SYRIAN TROOPS,
AND RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS IN BEKAA. PRESS HEADLINED: "PRES.
ASAD CONTINUES HIS TOURS OF OUR COMBAT FORMATIONS AND VISITS
CAMPS OF DEFENSE COMPANIES, TELLING THEM--"YOUR EFFORTS HAVE
PREVENTED LEBANON'S PARTITION AND CREATION OF A NEW
ISRAEL, AND HAVE PROTECTED PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE."". SEPT 27
EVENING TELEVISION DWELLED ON VISUAL EVIDENCE OF ASAD'S POPU-

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LARITY AMONG SOLDIERS OF DEFENSE COMPANIES COMMANDED BY HIS

BROTHER, LTC. RIF'AT AL-ASAD.

2. MEDIA REPORTED POPULAR RALLIES IN DAMASCUS PREVIOUS DAY IN WHICH MASES DENOUNCED "DESPICABLE CRIME" AND EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH "JUST MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST GANG." ASAD RECEIVED CABLES OF SUPPORT FOR HIS ACTION UNIFIED PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION OF BAATH PARTY. SAIQA, "STRUGGLE COUNCIL OF FATAH" (NOTE: SPLINTER GROUP BELIEVED TO OF SYRIAN INTELLIGENCE), PALESTINIAN PEASANTS UNION, UNION OF PALESTINIAN WRITERS AND JOURNALISTS IN SYRIA, PALESTINIAN RESIDENTS OF VARIOUS ALE-
STINIAN CAMPS IN SYRIA, GOVERNOR OF LATAKIA, COMMAND OF HOMS BAATH PARTY BRANCH, AND FROM PROPRIETOR OF SEMIRAMIS HOTEL. PRESS REFERRED TO TOTAL CONDEMNATION OF INCIDENT BY ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA, AND CITED TASS COMMENTARY SUGGESTING THAT OPERATION AIMED AT OBSTRUCTING IMPLEMENTATION OF JULY 29 SYRO-PALESTINIAN ACCORD. INTERIOR MIN DABBAGH VISITED WOUNDED IN LOCAL HOSPITALS AND PLEDGED THAT VIGILANCE OF HIS SECURITY FORCES WOULD PREVENT FURTHER ACTS TO UNDERMINE LOCAL SECURITY.

3. PRESS NOTED SARKIS CONTINUING HIS CONTACTS WITH VARIOUS LEBANESE PARTIES TO DISCUSS RETURN OF ORDER TO LEBANON. ARTICLE REITERATED THAT INFORMED SOURCES IN BEIRUT SPECULATE NEW LEBANESE GOVT. WILL BE FORMED BEFORE OCTOBER 3.

4. MEDIA GAVE LENGTHY COVERAGE TO SERIES OF MEETING IN BEKAA REGION BETWEEN REGIONAL COMMAND OF LEBANESE BAATH PARTY AND RESIDENTS OF BEKAA. ACCORDING TO REPORT, RESIDENTS LAUDED SYRIAN EFFORTS TO RESTORE SECURITY TO LEBANON. DELEGATION CHECKED ON SUPPLY DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AND PROGRESS IN COOPERATING WITH SYRIAN OFFICIALS TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL ITEMS SUCH AS HEATING OIL.

5. AL-BAATH EDITORIAL COMDEMNED FATAH AND BAGHDAD REGIME FOR PLANNING SEMIRAMIS OPERATION. AL-BAATH WONDERED HOW FATAH COULD PERPETRATE ACTIONS THAT ISOLATE IT FROM "ITS ONLY ALLY, SYRIA," AND PROVIDE IRAQI AND EGYPTIAN REGIMES WITH OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERMINE PALESTINIAN CAUSE. EDITORIAL CLAIMED PLANNERS "WANTED TO SABOTAGE TIRLESS EFFORTS EXERTED BY SYRIA TO RESOLVE CRISIS IN LEBANON; (IT APPEARS THAT) SOME FATAH LEADERS DO NOT MIND BEING CRIMINAL TOOLS IN HANDS OF BAGHDAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RULERS TO CARRY OUT THEIR SPITEFUL DESIGNS AGAINST SYRIA AND ITS PEOPLE." COLUMNIST REAFFIRMED STEADFASTNESS OF DAMASCUS TO PALESTINIAN CAUSE, " UNLIKE SADAT REGIME, WHICH BETRAYED CAUSE BY SIGNING SINAI ACCORD."

6. COMMENT: MEDIA EMPHASIZED PALESTINIAN SUPPORT OF SWIFT SYRIAN RESPONSE TO SEMIRAMIS INCIDENT. FATAH DENIAL OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR OPERATION DISREGARDED BY MEDIA. WHILE

EDITORIAL CONDEMNATION MAY BE DIRECTED AGAINST RENEGADE
(ABU NIDAL) FACTION OF FATAH IN BAGHDAD, THIS DISTINCTION
IS NOT CLEARLY BROUGHT OUT, NOR DO SYRIAN MEDIA SEEM WILLING
TO LET FATAH OFF HOOK SO EASILY. LEBANESE BAATHIST MEETINGS
WITH BEKAA INBABITANTS REMAND SYRIAN AUDICENCE OF POSITIVE
EFFORTS IN SYRIAN-CONTROLLED AREAS TO FACILITATE RETURN TO NROMALCY
THERE.
MURPHY

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